

# Sky Meadows State Park

## Master Plan

Public Meeting    May 19, 2021







# Agenda

## Introductions

**Melissa Baker**

Director of Virginia State Parks

**Kevin Bowman**

Park Manager, Sky Meadows State Park

**Bill Conkle**

DCR Park Planner

- State Park History
- Intro to Sky Meadows State Park
- Master Plan Process
- Review Sky Meadows master plan
- Public Comment via Chat Box

# Housekeeping

- Place all phones / mics on mute
- All comments & questions accepted in Chat Box (These will be recorded and responses will be made prior to June 20, 2021)
- This presentation will be available online following the meeting

Additional comments will be received until June 20, via email or in writing to:

**Bill Conkle, Park Planner**  
**Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation**  
**600 East Main Street, 24th Floor**  
**Richmond, VA 23219**  
[Bill.Conkle@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:Bill.Conkle@dcr.virginia.gov)  
**804-786-5492 or by fax @ 804-371-7899**







# Meeting Purpose

To present the park master plan and facility phasing. Public input is encouraged regarding recommended park amenities. Attendees will have the opportunity to provide input with regard to priorities for facilities and outdoor recreation opportunities.



# Introduction to state parks

## **DCR Mission**

Conserve, protect, enhance and advocate wise use of the Commonwealth's unique natural, historical, recreational, scenic and cultural resources.

## **State Park Mission**

To conserve the natural, scenic, historic and cultural resources of the Commonwealth and provide recreational and educational opportunities consistent with the good stewardship of these lands, waters and facilities that leave them unimpaired for future generations.





# History of Virginia State Parks

## The first 6 parks...out of the Depression

1936: Virginia opens a system of 6 state parks...most were a combination of donated land plus state funds for development





# The System Grows

1940's through 1980's:

A steady procession of new parks acquired and developed through a combination of funds: donations, federal grant money and state capital development





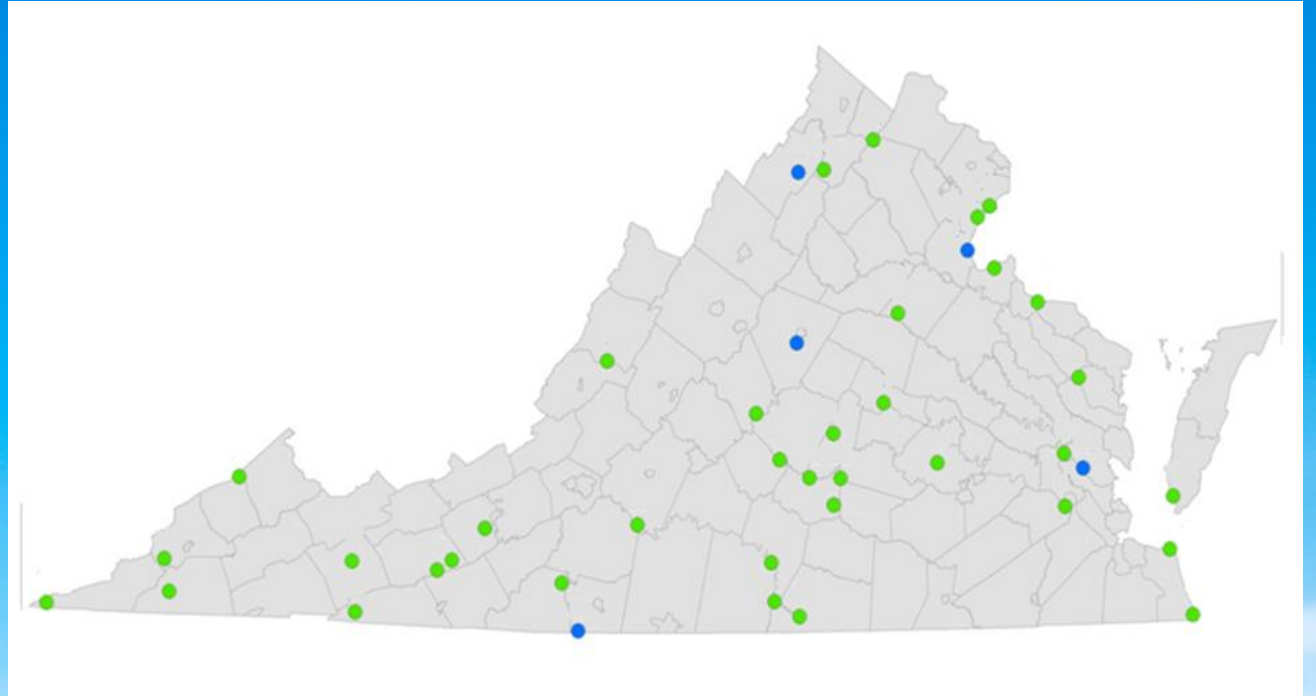
# Voters support more growth and development

1990's through present: Two major bond referendums in 1992 and 2002 funded more than \$214 million in funds; 5 new parks and land for 6 more; 31 natural areas; 296 building projects: campgrounds, cabins, support facilities, etc.

We continue to acquire lands, largely by donation or discounted sales... the challenge is to find the development funds.

# Today's Virginia State Park System

40 parks, 4 under development  
75,895 acres  
34 historic register sites  
662 miles of trails  
32 parks with overnight facilities  
11 day use parks  
29 visitor centers  
99 picnic shelters  
11 swimming beaches  
4 swimming pools  
2 restaurants; 19 snack bars





# Park Services and Facilities

Each park has a unique set of facilities, activities and services

Day Uses: hiking,  
swimming, picnicking,  
boating, bicycling,  
horse riding,  
canoeing, rafting

Overnight: cabins  
and camping

Programs, education,  
interpretation

Conference and  
meeting facilities



# The relevancy of state parks in the 21<sup>st</sup> century & beyond

Parks are a part of the Community:  
Friends Groups, volunteerism, economic benefit.

Solutions to many of today's challenges: "Nature Deficit Disorder", daily stress, and the need for affordable recreational opportunities.

The need for parks is greater today than it has ever been ... places to reconnect to nature, to be with families and friends, and to re-establish personal well being.



# Sky Meadows State Park

A total of 1,860 acres located in Clarke and Fauquier Counties.







# Mission

To provide minimal impact recreation, thus allowing people to feel a part of the land, a part of the site, and a connection with the agricultural practices that formed this unique pastoral landscape over time.







# Guiding Theme

Sky Meadows State Park preserves an integral part of the Historic Crooked Run Valley's pastoral landscape creating a place of rich natural diversity, peaceful recreation, and personal rejuvenation.





# Nature

Inviting exploration of rich natural diversity.

Sky Meadows' nature is a legacy of an ongoing dance between human agricultural practices and native ecosystems.







# Agriculture

Exploring day-to-day life of an historic Piedmont farm.

Crop fields, gardens, pastures and grazing livestock continue a vital agricultural tradition that showcases the day-to-day life on a historic middle-class Piedmont farm.







# History

**Connecting visitors with the historic cultural framework of the continuing American experience.**

Within the historic structures, artifacts, stone walls and old roadbeds lie the stories of those who shaped this pastoral landscape from the Colonial Era to today.







# Rest and Rejuvenation

**Providing opportunities to escape the pressures and routines of daily life.**

Breathtaking vistas, scenic multi-use trails and a primitive campground invite deep restoration and rejuvenation for the mind, body and spirit.





# Trails

- 22 miles of hiking trails
- 10.5 miles of equestrian and biking trails
- Sensory Explorers' Trail





# Backcountry Camping

- Open Year-Round
- Individual and Group Sites





# Family and Youth

- Children's Discovery Area
- Year-round events and programs





# Dark Sky Park

International Dark Sky Association





# Staff

## Full-Time:

- Park Manager
- Chief Ranger Visitor Experience
- Chief Ranger Law Enforcement / Operations
- Office Manager
- Park Ranger Law Enforcement

## Part-Time:

- Maintenance Rangers
- Contact Rangers
- Administrative Assistants
- Park Interpreters
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Trails Coordinator



# Volunteers and Partners







# Financials

- \$334,000 Operating Budget
- \$372,000 in Revenue (FY'20)



# Sky Meadows State Park

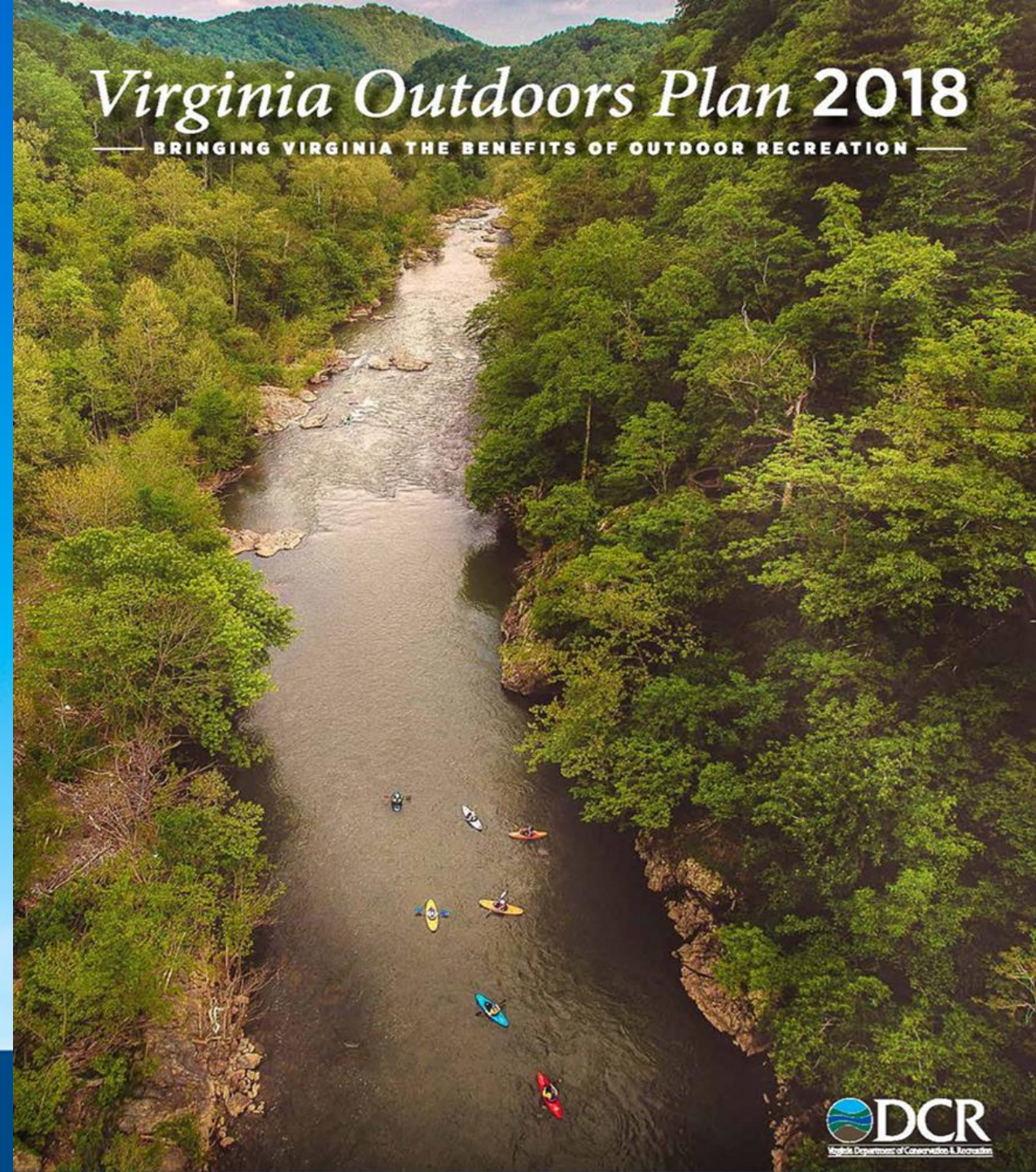
Gateway to the Crooked Run Valley



# Master Plan Process

## *Virginia Outdoors Plan 2018*

— BRINGING VIRGINIA THE BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR RECREATION —





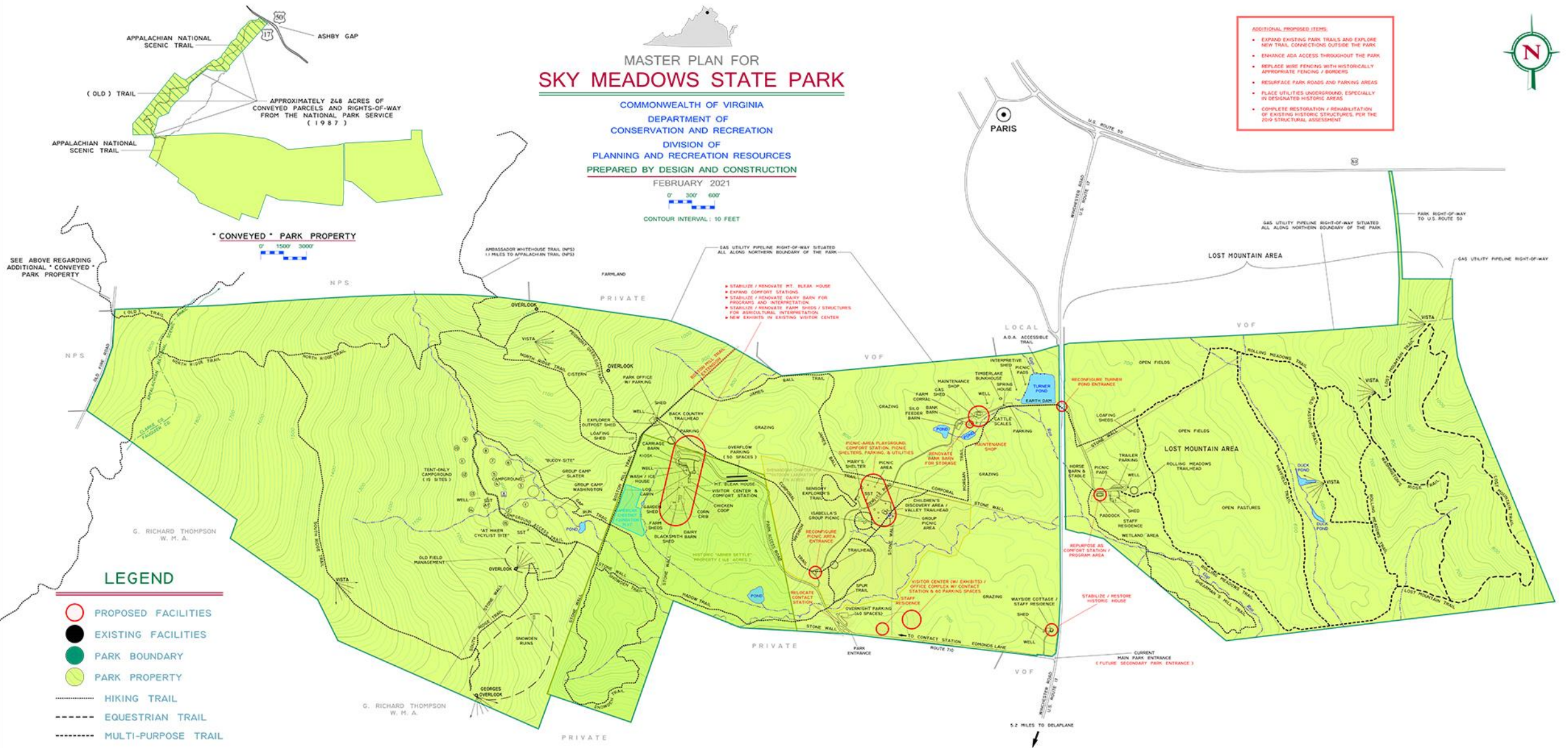
# State Park Master Planning Code

## § 10.1-200.1. State park master planning

- (i) for all **existing state parks**, (ii) **substantial land acquisitions**, (iii) prior to major **improvements**
- A **guide for the development, utilization and management** of its natural, cultural and historic resources
- Developed in stages with public input
- Required to be updated every 10 years



# Sky Meadows State Park Master Plan



SKY MEADOWS STATE PARK IS 1,859.68 ACRES  
LOCATED IN CLARKE & FAUQUIER COUNTIES, VIRGINIA



# Sky Meadows Phase 1

- Reconfigure Turner Pond / Lost Mountain / Route 17 intersection, particularly for safe ingress and egress for Turner Pond, to include safe hiking / biking / equestrian crossing
- Reconfigure Edmonds Lane / Picnic Area road intersection for safe ingress / egress
- Construct a Maintenance Shop
- Road improvements / resurfacing of existing roads (to include bike lanes) and parking areas



# Sky Meadows Phase 1 (continued)

- Enhance the Abner Settle Historic Area:
  - Stabilize and renovate Mount Bleak House
  - Stabilize and renovate dairy barn for programs and interpretation
  - Stabilize and renovate farm structures for agricultural use and interpretation
  - Expand comfort stations in historic area
  - Replace wire fencing with period fencing and restore stone walls in historic area
  - Place utility wires underground in historic area
- Stabilize and restore Wayside Cottage (c. 1781) as staff residence
- Complete restoration/rehabilitation of Historic structures, per the 2019 Structural Assessment
- Enhance picnic area with utilities and comfort station



# Sky Meadows Phase 2

- Stabilize and renovate Bank Barn for maintenance storage
- Construct Visitor Center (with exhibits) and park office (5000 sf) on Edmonds Lane
- Construct a new contact station with comfort station



# Sky Meadows Phase 3

- Staff residence
- Renovate and repurpose current horse barn as a comfort station

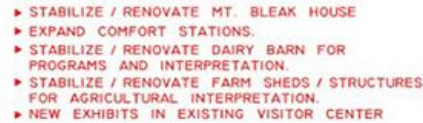


## Blowup of West side of park & Appalachian Trail





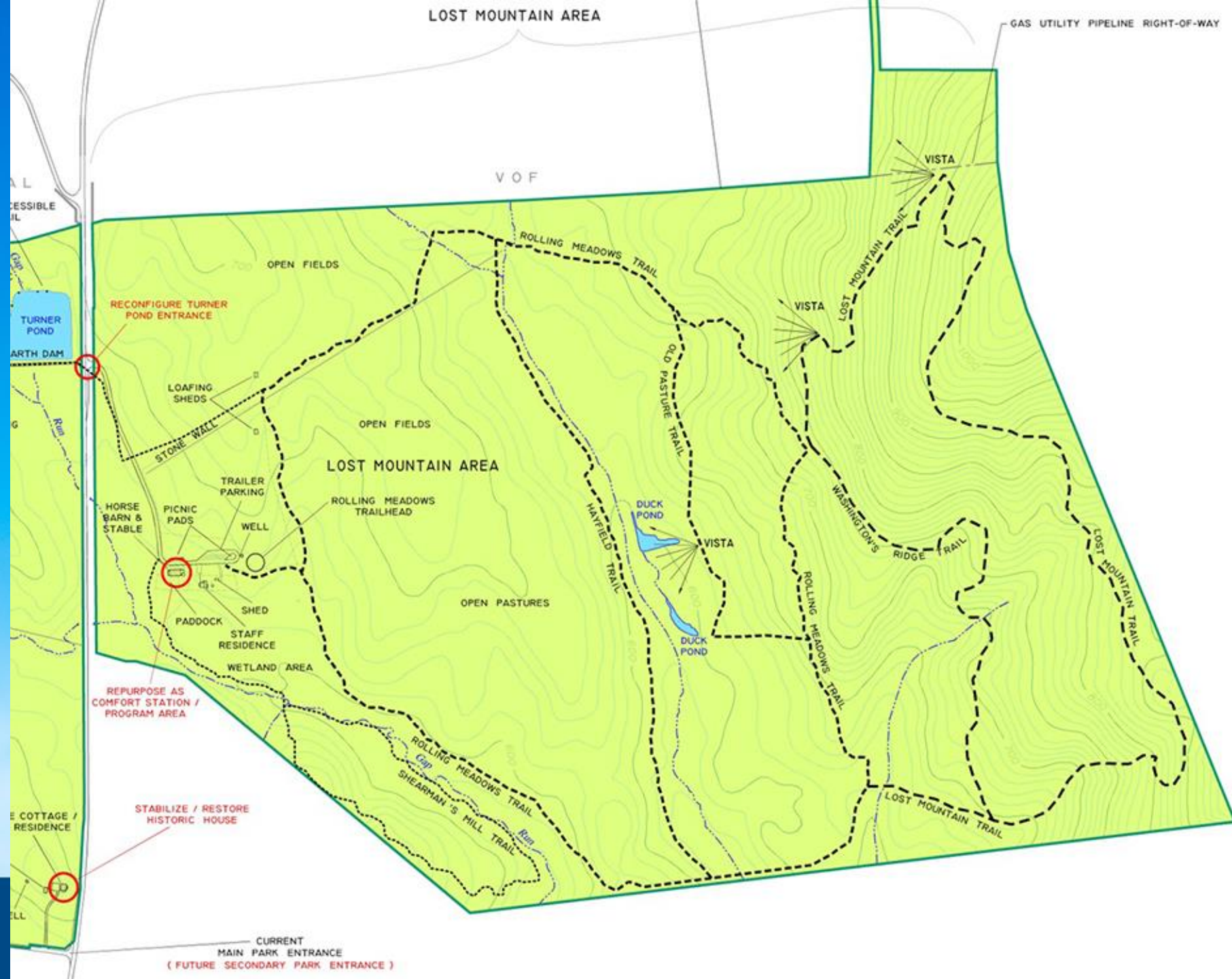
## Blowup of Central park property with Historic Area





# Sky Meadows State Park Master Plan

## Blowup East of U.S. 17 (Lost Mountain Area)







# Public Input Session Guidelines

**Bill Conkle, Facilitator**

**Please make comments  
in the chatbox.**

**These will be recorded and responded  
to by June 20, 2021**





# Send comments

Written comments will be accepted up until 5:00 p.m. on June 20, 2021.

Please send to:

**Bill Conkle**, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation

600 East Main Street, 24th Floor  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

or email [Bill.Conkle@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:Bill.Conkle@dcr.virginia.gov)  
or by fax to 804-371-7899.





# Next Steps



- Update the Executive Summary and Map
- Present to Board of Conservation and Recreation for recommended approval
- Send updated plan to General Assembly for 30 day review
- Adoption of plan by DCR Director





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